

The President's Page



ARE YOU KEEPING UP-TO-DATE?

SIR JOSEPH LISTER, the great English surgeon, was keenly aware of the tremendous importance of postgraduate medical education to the busy—and often harried—practicing physician. He once summed it up for his students with this trenchant statement:

“You must always be students, learning and unlearning until your life’s end, and if, gentlemen, you are not prepared to follow your profession in this spirit, I implore you to leave its ranks and betake yourselves to some third-class trade.”

This was true in Sir Joseph’s day and—because medical progress now is in its own jet age—it is doubly true today. Continuing your medical education is one of the most vital responsibilities you have, for the good of your patients and for your own professional good.

Most California physicians are meeting this responsibility. All studies show that they are attending postgraduate courses in unprecedented numbers—voluntarily and with considerable investment in time and money. This is strong evidence that the great majority of our physicians *are* lifelong students of medicine and that they intend to continue to provide the finest possible care for their patients.

The importance of continuing medical education has long been recognized by the California Medical Association. Our first Committee on Postgraduate Activities was appointed in 1934. Since that time, postgraduate education for physicians all over the county has grown from infancy to

young adulthood—from a few scattered, loosely organized conferences to an enormous program accounting for millions of dollars and thousands of hours of time and effort.

The great expansion of knowledge has been accompanied by rapid expansion of medical postgraduate courses, radio and television programs and medical journals and publications—all designed to keep the physician abreast of the scientific revolution.

Since World War II, formal postgraduate departments have been organized in our California medical schools. The CMA has maintained close cooperation with them. Directors of continuing medical education in five of our medical schools serve as consulting members on the CMA’s Committee on Continuing Medical Education.

In postgraduate institutes and circuit courses jointly sponsored by the CMA, county medical societies and the medical schools, we have tried to create a climate in which there will be more understanding and closer cooperation between teachers and practitioners. In attempting to act as a catalyst, we have publicized all postgraduate courses and medical meetings in the state by listing them in *CALIFORNIA MEDICINE* and in *Medical Dates Bulletin*.

An accreditation program for continuing medical education courses is being developed by the American Medical Association’s Council on Medical Education.

We are never satisfied with the status quo. We seek better quality, more efficient methods, keener evaluation techniques of the effects of continuing education on the practice of medicine, a more secure financial basis for these departments in medical schools, studies of the actual needs of our physicians and ways to encourage more active participation by more physicians.

The CMA’s Committee on Continuing Medical Education, with full cooperation of the medical

schools, is studying all these problems. It has embarked on some new projects intended to help solve them.

One is a thorough study of physicians' needs in continuing education, including a study of how physicians apply what they learn after attending postgraduate courses. Another is a new bi-monthly continuing education page in *CALIFORNIA MEDICINE* devoted to all facets of the program. Third, a four-page insert devoted to postgraduate education will appear annually, starting this fall, in *CMA News*. Fourth, an information center and postgraduate clearing house is being set up through which all data on every postgraduate course and

medical meeting in the state will be made easily available to all physicians, medical schools and medical organizations.

I urge each of you to make the fullest possible use of your postgraduate education opportunities. Make known your requests. They will be answered. Choose carefully, from the rich feast available, those courses that will be most useful to you and to your patients. The courses are there for the asking. It's up to you to use them.

Ralph C. Teall



ACTIONS AT AMA MEETING

THE FOLLOWING REPORT of actions taken by the AMA House of Delegates at the annual meeting held June 20-24, 1965, in New York is excerpted from a letter sent to all California Medical Association members by Dr. Ralph C. Teall, president:

1. Affirmed that: "Physicians of America pledge themselves to continue their search and activity, in whatever social environment may develop, to secure or restore the freedom, high quality and availability of medical care which has been traditional in our country."
2. Affirmed the position that "It is each individual physician's obligation to decide for himself whether the conditions of a case for which he is about to accept responsibility permit him to provide his own highest quality of medical care."
3. Reaffirmed Section 6 of the *Principles of Medical Ethics* and the Bauer amendment.
4. Reaffirmed opposition to the inclusion of the services of the four hospital-related specialties in Part 1-A of H.R. 6675.
5. Reaffirmed opposition to the compulsory inclusion of physicians under the Social Security Program.
6. Restated offer that AMA confer with President Johnson to insure high quality care and appropriate amendment of Medicare-type legislation to achieve this end.
7. Recommended appointment of representative physicians to serve on advisory committees in all Federal health care programs.
8. Recommended that a physician be appointed to be an Assistant Secretary of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.